



funds to start the North Atlantic Regional Study, a framework on which subsequent basin and project justification studies in the North Atlantic region would be based.

A month before the August meeting, the President had signed the Water Resources Planning Act, which established the Water Resources Council. The Act and the North Atlantic Regional Study were the predecessors of the current federal rules for water resources planning that emphasize a basin perspective, multi-objective assessments, public involvement, and risk assessment. Several federal/state river basin organizations were formed under Title II of the Water Resources Planning Act, but supporting federal funds were terminated in 1981. The organizations that survive take a variety of forms designed by their member states to address specific issues, often including drought. Their diversity is demonstrated in the following sample from the northeastern quadrant of the country.

- ☀ The Delaware River Basin Commission, created in 1961, is active in drought management. The Commission informed us they have coordinated efforts to negotiate drought mitigation programs throughout the Delaware River Basin. Such initiatives help cities and states in the basin prepare for, not simply respond to, drought. The programs have been responsible for preserving billions of gallons of reservoir storage while maintaining streamflows during drought periods.
- ☀ The Susquehanna River Basin Commission, created in 1970, was built on a statute similar to that of the Delaware River Basin Commission and is likewise engaged in drought management. The Commission presents the opportunity for major water users and other interested parties to assess the effectiveness of drought management measures, list the lessons learned in managing drought, and compile and distribute the findings to key decision makers. The Commission told us that they recently developed a plan to coordinate drought management activities

among the signatory agencies in the river basin. The next stage of the plan will develop strategies to mitigate environmental impacts resulting from drought. Those strategies incorporate what the Commission described as detailed instream flow needs assessments that are cutting-edge technologies in environmental drought management.

- ☀ Congress ratified an interstate compact for the Potomac River, but the member states did not sign it. They rely instead on the Interstate Compact on the Potomac River formed under the older (1940) Potomac Valley Compact. This organization helped broker a water supply agreement among Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia that relies on joint operation and annual drought exercises to assure dependable water supply. It has demonstrated that coordination and management of water resources on a regional multi-jurisdictional basis during drought periods can allow a major metropolitan area to sustain itself. This group emphasized that its coordination efforts involve “the development and maintenance of a drought preparedness plan and the annual exercise of that plan.” The exercise is undertaken “to refine [the plan’s] relevance and bring newly hired and replacement personnel from the several jurisdictions and water suppliers up to date on this critical issue of regional water resources management.”
- ☀ The Ohio River Basin Commission, established in 1971, is an informal structure that serves as a forum to discuss, study, develop, and coordinate regional policies and positions on common interstate water issues. Member states include Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. The Commission should not be confused with the Ohio River Valley Sanitation Commission, which was formed in 1948 under an interstate compact to manage water quality.